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Renewal of the CGIAR: The Final Milestone

**Report on the Establishment of the Impact Assessment
and Evaluation Group**

Please find attached a report from the Cosponsors on the above subject. The report summarizes the actions taken by the Cosponsors and their recommendations of individuals for membership in the Impact Assessment and Evaluation Group.

This report should be considered as background to Agenda Item 7.

Progress Report by the Cosponsors on the Establishment of the CGIAR Impact Assessment and Evaluation Group

Background

At the Ministerial-Level Meeting held in Lucerne, the CGIAR was requested to "strengthen the assessment of its performance and impact by establishing an independent evaluation function reporting to the CGIAR as a whole." At MTM95 the CGIAR decided to establish an Impact Assessment and Evaluation Group (IAEG) with the following terms of reference:

1. Provide oversight and guidance to *ex post* impact assessment activities within the CGIAR, including the area of impact assessment methodologies, and recommend appropriate CGIAR or Center action.
2. Generate, or ensure the generation of, comprehensive and up-to-date information on the impact of the CGIAR as a system, in close collaboration with the Centers, TAC, and partner institutions, and keeping in mind the demands from the CGIAR.
3. Facilitate the strengthening of the System's impact assessment capabilities.

The Cosponsors were asked to serve as a search and selection committee and propose the chair and members of the IAEG to the CGIAR for endorsement. CGIAR members were asked to nominate candidates.

At MTM95 the CGIAR also endorsed a proposal to set up a "sounding board," on an experimental basis, as part of the new evaluation effort. The Cosponsors were asked to make recommendations on the "sounding board."

As a third component of the new evaluation effort, the CGIAR endorsed suggestions to strengthen inter-Center efforts to harmonize data generation, methodologies, and analysis in support of the IAEG. In this connection, the CGIAR saw a need for an Inter-Center Working Group to deal with the range of issues covering impact assessment and evaluation.

This report summarizes the actions and recommendations of the Cosponsors regarding the IAEG.

Actions by the Cosponsors

The Cosponsors have taken the following actions *vis-à-vis* the IAEG:

- explored alternative composition and operational modality options for the IAEG;
- prepared a short list of candidates; and
- explored the interest and availability of the candidates proposed.

With this report, the Cosponsors:

- make recommendations on the mandate, composition, and operational modality of the IAEG; and
- propose candidates for membership in the IAEG.

The Cosponsors have also discussed the rationale for and the potential role of a "sounding board." While they agree that the IAEG might function more effectively if it were to interact with a group of users of impact information on a regular basis, they recommend caution in setting up too formal a structure. All stakeholders should have an opportunity to interact with the IAEG, at CGIAR meetings and workshops and other fora the IAEG might organize. The Cosponsors recommend, therefore, that the CGIAR revisit the idea of a "sounding board" after the IAEG becomes operational and establishes mechanisms for interaction with the users of impact information.

Views on the Establishment of the IAEG

Mandate. The TOR limits the work of the IAEG initially to *ex-post* impact assessment. The Working Group will collaborate on the generation of impact studies and on methodological issues. Most of the impact studies will be done by or through the Centers. Therefore, it is imperative that the IAEG and the Working Group clarify their respective roles, working relationships, and expectations from the beginning. Thus, the TOR of the IAEG should be seen as its starting mandate, subject to modification as the IAEG gains experience.

There is merit in keeping the mandate of the IAEG limited to *ex-post* impact assessment initially. The greatest need in the System is for this type of information, and enabling the IAEG to focus on this would help to fill the gap.

Composition. The initial model for the IAEG, as proposed in the CGIAR Chair's April 6, 1995 letter, called for a membership comprised of two persons, one part-time and one full-time (or close to full-time). After further reflection and dialogue with the CGIAR Chair, the Cosponsors have agreed that the IAEG should also include natural science expertise, because the main job of the group will be to assess the impact of science.

Under this scenario, the IAEG would be made up of three members with expertise in:

- social science, with a focus on agricultural research impact assessment;
- methods and practice of evaluation; and
- natural science.

The Cosponsors propose that the IAEG be formed as a three-person team of eminent persons, all engaged on a part-time basis and supported by a full-time "executive officer."

Operational Modality. A two-step establishment process is suggested. First, the Cosponsors would recommend a slate of names for endorsement by the CGIAR, and, following such endorsement, would formally appoint the chair and members. Second, the Cosponsors, in consultation with the chair and members of the IAEG would select the executive officer.

The IAEG and its executive officer should operate out of a base preserving the IAEG's independence. This would eliminate one of the Centers as a base. The Cosponsors are exploring various options that will preserve the IAEG's independence.

Time commitments. IAEG members would be expected to devote time analogous to members of TAC. Time demands are expected to be higher during the first year. The Chair would be expected to devote more time than the other two members.

Terms of appointment would be similar to those of TAC members (two-year, renewable first term). *Honoraria* should also be comparable to those for TAC members.

The IAEG would be expected to deliver an *annual report to the CGIAR* on the System's impact. Its would develop its own work program in consultation with the Chairman, Cosponsors, TAC, the Working Group, and other stakeholders.

The System's experience with IAEG *should be reviewed* after a few years. It would be desirable to conduct this review as part of a System review, if one is to be commissioned during the next 3 to 4 years. Otherwise an independent review of the System's evaluation activities should be conducted in 3 to 4 year's time.

The *annual cost* of the IAEG, which will be covered by the Cosponsors, is expected to be on the order of \$400,000 to \$500,000, excluding the cost of commissioned studies.

Recommended Chair and Members. The Cosponsors recommend the following individuals as the members of the inaugural Impact Assessment and Evaluation Group for renewable terms of two years each:

W. James Peacock (Australia), Chair
Eleanor Chelimsky (USA)
Eugenia Muchnik de Rubinstein (Chile)

Brief biographical information on these individuals is attached.

**Biographical Information on Individuals
Nominated for Membership in the IAEG**

W. James Peacock

Jim Peacock is Chief of the Division of Plant Industry of the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO), in Canberra, Australia, a position he has held since 1978. During his research career in CSIRO, which began in 1965, he has held a number of visiting professorships in biology, biochemistry, and molecular biology, including at Stanford University, the University of California, Los Angeles, and the University of Oregon. Jim Peacock is a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Science and the Royal Society of London. He obtained his BSc and PhD from the University of Sydney in Botany and Genetics.

Eleanor Chelimsky

Eleanor Chelimsky was GAO's Assistant Comptroller General for Program Evaluation prior to her recent retirement. She directed GAO's Program Evaluation and Methodology Division from 1980. The division serves the United States Congress by conducting evaluations of government programs and developing and demonstrating United States methods for evaluating those programs. Mrs. Chelimsky is a member of the Advisory Boards for the University of Chicago's School of Social Service Administration and for Carnegie-Mellon's John Heinz School of Public Policy. She is also a member of the Editorial Review Board for the Sage Research Series in Evaluation, and serves on the Editorial Boards of two journals: *Policy Studies Review* and *Policy Studies Review Annual*. She is a past president of the Evaluation Research Society, and in May 1993, was elected President of the American Evaluation Association.

Eugenia Muchnik de Rubinstein

Eugenia Muchnik de Rubinstein is a Professor of Agricultural Economics at the Catholic University of Chile. She has served as Director of the Graduate Program and of the Department of Agricultural Economics since 1985. Her previous experience includes appointments at the Centro Internacional de Agricultura Tropical (CIAT) in Cali, Colombia, and at the University of Minnesota, in the United States. Ms. Muchnik has been a member of the CGIAR's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) for five years, and will complete her term in 1995. She has served as Research Project Evaluator for the National Commission for Science and Technology and for the University of Santiago, Chile, and has been a consultant to the FAO, WHO, the World Bank, and IFPRI, primarily on food and nutrition issues.